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CHARGE D'AFFAIRES a.i.

9/22/75

LEGAL ATTACHE ROBERT W. SCHERRER

FEDERAL POLICE OF ARGENTINA

5-1-01
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Argentina Project

On 9/16/75, Australian Ambassador to Argentina Hugh Dunn contacted me to request my assistance in setting up an interview with some ranking Federal Police of Argentina (FPA) official who would be knowledgeable of the general terrorist situation in Argentina with particular emphasis on recent events that occurred in the Australian Ambassador's residence. (S) (U)

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Accordingly, on 9/22/75, I arranged an interview for Ambassador Dunn with Comisario General Jorge Crovetto, Director of Federal Security, FPA. I went along with Ambassador Dunn to act as his interpreter. (S) (U)

Crovetto assured Ambassador Dunn that the FPA would do everything possible to protect the Australian Embassy and residence from terrorist attacks. Crovetto assured the Ambassador that the bombing at the University of Belgrano opposite the Australian Embassy residence was in no way connected with the Australian Embassy or the Ambassador. Crovetto told the Ambassador that the FPA clearly recognized the potential for terrorist actions to be carried out against diplomatic representatives of foreign countries in Argentina in order to embarrass the Argentine Government and call attention to the terrorist goals in overthrowing the government. Crovetto told Ambassador Dunn that the FPA had no current intelligence indicating that the foreign diplomatic community in Argentina was being targeted for terrorist actions in the immediate future. Ambassador Dunn asked Crovetto whether it could be established if a building adjacent to the Australian Embassy residence was still occupied. (S) (U)

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- 1 - Addressee
- 1 - Ambassador;s Briefing Book
- 2 - Bue (109-103)
(1 - 64-2)

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by the Cuban Embassy, it being noted that last year this building apparently was used by the Cubans as a school for dependents. Ambassador Dunn noted that this building was still occupied and that there were comings and goings at various hours of the evening, which, if the building were available to terrorists, would provide an excellent base of operations against the Australian Embassy residence. Crovetto ordered Comisario Inspector Antonio Meyorin, Chief of Foreign Affairs, Department of Federal Security, to ascertain this information for Ambassador Dunn. Crovetto also instructed that the local FPA precinct covering the Australian Embassy's residence and the FPA Metropolitan Security Division give additional emphasis to patrolling this area. (S) (U)

Ambassador Dunn asked Crovetto for a personal evaluation of the terrorist situation in Argentina in order that he could relay this information to Canberra. Crovetto told Ambassador Dunn that in his view, terrorism could be eliminated through normal police operations within the next six months, provided that the unprecedented corruption in the Argentine Government is also eliminated to a tolerable degree in order to remove the motivation for many individuals to associate with illegal organizations, specifically the Montoneros. Crovetto also noted that until Argentine security forces learn to coordinate their intelligence and to trust each other with sensitive information, the war against terrorism will merely be a holding action. In answer to a question from Ambassador Dunn, Crovetto stated he would estimate, based on available intelligence, that the strength of the Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo (People's Revolutionary Army) (ERP) militants in Argentina numbers no more than 1,800. Crovetto noted, however, that the ERP had many supporters who, although not militants, provide material and ideological backing to the ERP. Again answering a question posed by Ambassador Dunn, Crovetto stated that the Montoneros are composed of many individuals who are not Marxists per se, but have associated themselves with the Montoneros in order to voice their displeasure and make a contribution for change with regard to the present course which Peronism now finds itself. For this reason, Crovetto told (S) (U)

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Ambassador Dunn that a numerical estimate of actual Montonero militants would be virtually impossible for any intelligence officer in Argentina to arrive at with any degree of accuracy. ~~(S)~~ (U)

Crovetto terminated the meeting by expressing the hope that Ambassador Dunn would continue to be in personal touch with any problems that might arise with regard to security of the Australian diplomatic establishment in Buenos Aires. ~~(S)~~ (U)

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